

Claims

1. Use of inhibitors of the TRAIL ligand/TRAIL receptor system for the manufacture of a medicament for the prevention or treatment of viral infections.
2. The use of claim 1 for the prevention or treatment of influenza or Borna disease virus infections.
3. The use of claim 1 for the prevention or treatment of influenza virus infections.
4. The use of any one of claims 1-3 for the prevention or treatment of viral infections in humans.
5. The use of any one of claims 1-3 for the prevention or treatment of viral infections in domestic or wild animals.
6. The use of any one of claims 1-5 wherein the inhibitor is a TRAIL ligand inhibitor.
7. The use of claim 6 wherein the TRAIL ligand inhibitor is selected from
 - (a) an inhibitory anti-TRAIL-ligand-antibody or a fragment thereof, and
 - (b) a soluble TRAIL-receptor molecule or a TRAIL ligand-binding portion thereof.
8. The use of claim 7 wherein the TRAIL-receptor molecule is selected from TRAIL receptor-1, TRAIL receptor-2, TRAIL receptor-3, TRAIL receptor-4 and OPG (osteoprotegerin).

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9. The use of claims 8 or 9 wherein the TRAIL ligand inhibitor is an extracellular domain of a TRAIL receptor molecule optionally fused to a heterologous polypeptide domain.
- 5 10. The use of claim 9 wherein the TRAIL ligand inhibitor is an extracellular domain of a TRAIL receptor molecule fused to a Fc immunoglobulin molecule.
- 10 11. The use of any one of claims 1-5 wherein the inhibitor is a TRAIL receptor inhibitor.
12. The use of claim 11 wherein the TRAIL receptor inhibitor is selected from
 - (a) an inhibitory anti-TRAIL receptor-antibody or a fragment thereof; and
 - (b) an inhibitory TRAIL ligand fragment.
- 15 13. The use of any one of claims 1-5 wherein the inhibitor is a nucleic acid effector molecule.
- 20 14. The use of claim 13 wherein the nucleic acid effector molecule is selected from anti-sense molecules, RNAi molecules and ribozymes.
- 15 25 16. The use of any one of claims 1-5 wherein the inhibitor is an inhibitor of intracellular TRAIL receptor signal transduction.
- 30 16. The use of any one of claims 1-5 wherein the inhibitor is an inhibitor of the interaction of the Death domain of TRAIL receptor-1 or TRAIL receptor-2 with the Death domain of FADD or an inhibitor of the interaction of the Death Effector domain of FADD with caspase-8 and/or caspase-10.

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17. The use of any one of claims 1-16 wherein the medicament comprises at least one inhibitor as the active ingredient together with pharmaceutically acceptable carriers, diluents and/or adjuvants.
- 5 18. The use of any one of claims 1-17 wherein the medicament comprises a further active ingredient.
- 10 19. A method of identifying and/or characterizing inhibitors of viral infections comprising determining if a compound is capable of inhibiting the TRAIL/TRAIL receptor system.
20. The method of claim 19 wherein the inhibition comprises an inhibition of TRAIL/TRAIL receptor mediated apoptosis.
- 15 21. The method of claim 19 wherein the inhibition comprises an inhibition of TRAIL/TRAIL receptor mediated cell activation.